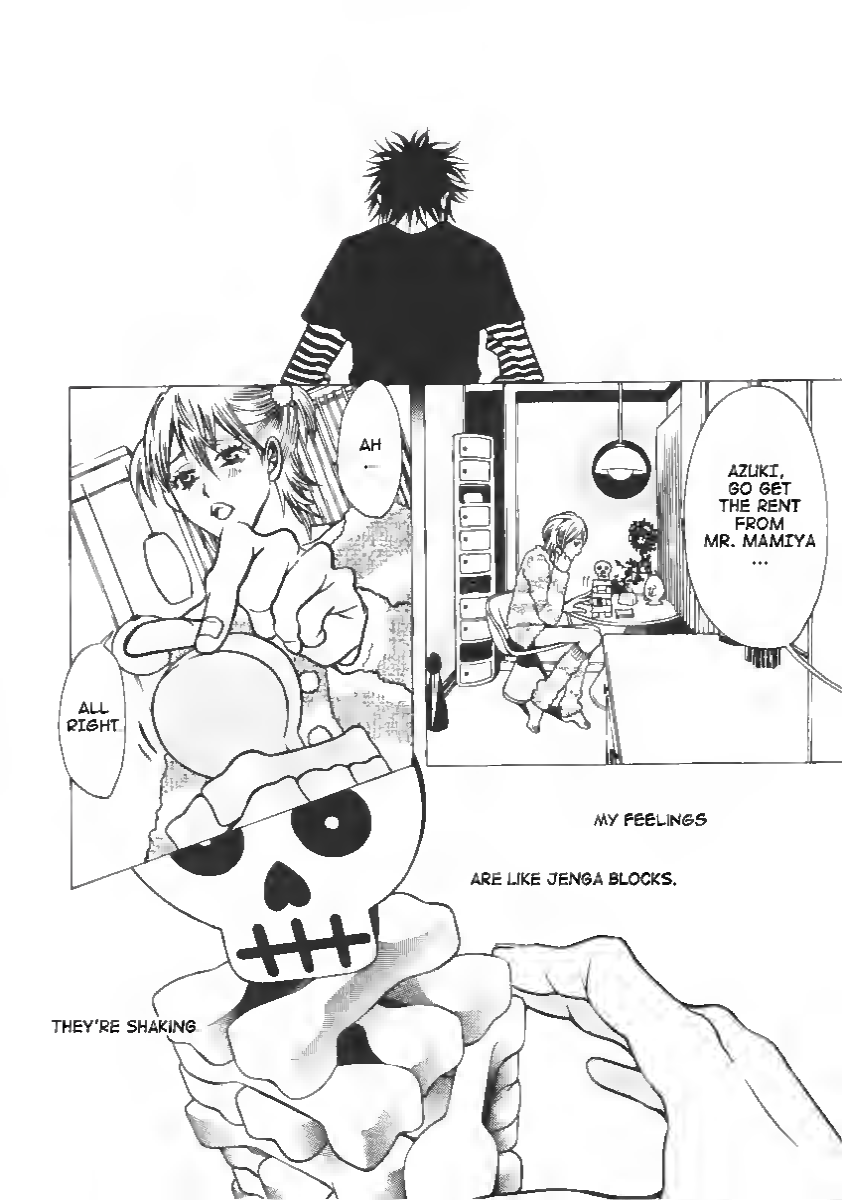
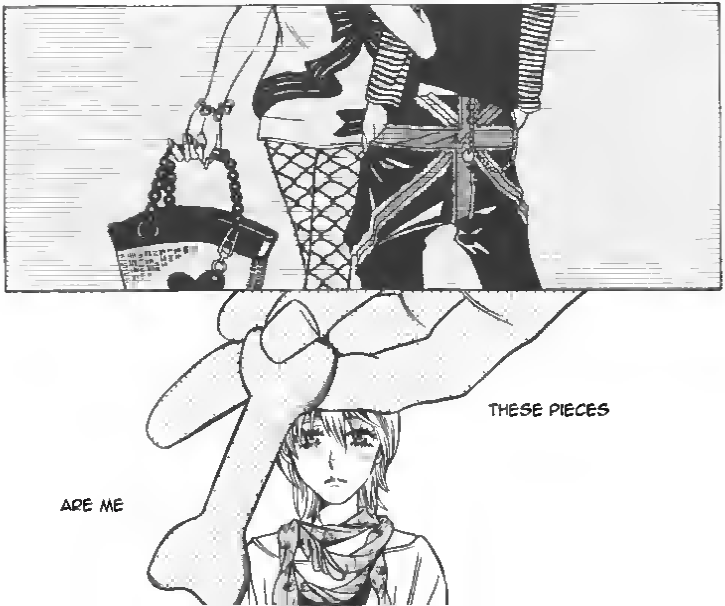
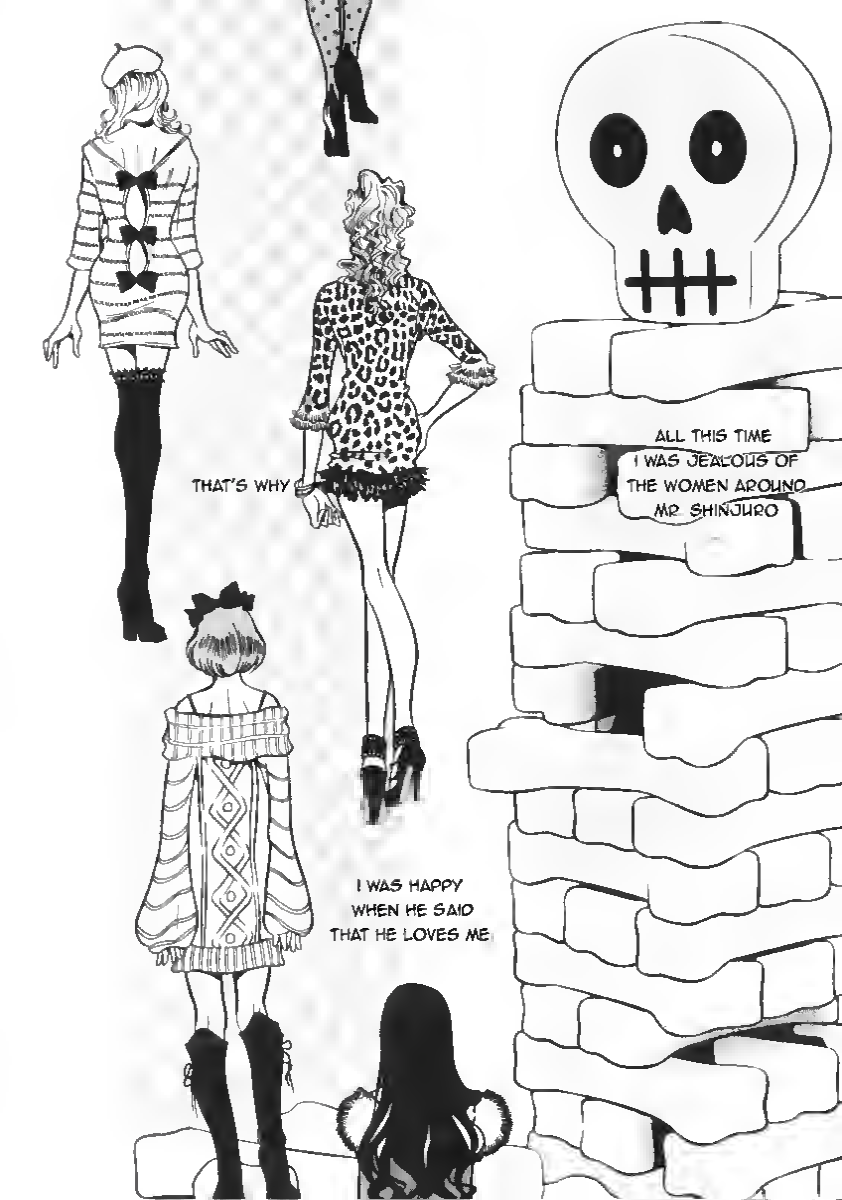
EMBALMING 37


AZUKI, GO GET THE RENT FROM MR. MAMIYA ...
AH —
ALL RIGHT
MY FEELINGS
ARE LIKE JENGA BLOCKS.
THEY'RE SHAKING

I'M SORRY, I'M NOT GONNA KEEP SILENT ANY LONGER
I LOVE YOU!


THESE PIECES
ARE ME


ALL THIS TIME I WAS JEALOUS OF THE WOMEN AROUND MR. SHINJURO
THAT'S WHY
I WAS HAPPY WHEN HE SAID THAT HE LOVES ME

I DON'T KNOW WHEN I BROKE INTO PIECES
"I LOVE YOU" HAS MANY MEANINGS
YOU CAN "LOVE" A FAMILY
YOU CAN "LOVE" A FRIEND
YOU CAN "LOVE" OUT OF RESPECT.
YOU CAN "LOVE" A FACE AND A BODY
AND YOU CAN TRULY "LOVE".
DOES MR. SHINJUURO LOVE ME THIS WAY?

I HAVE A FEELING...
PARTING IS GETTING CLOSER TOO.
WHY DO I FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE?
ALTHOUGH THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US GOT SMALLER,
THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP WILL COME TO AN END
ring
Bam!
YES?
AH...
MR. WAO ...
ring
ring
ring

I CAN'T SLEEP ...
SHIVER
!

shiver
WHAT THE...?
WHAT'S THAT?
IT HASN'T BEEN LIKE THIS BEFORE
IT MUST BE MY IMAGI-NATION
IT'JUST HUGGING, ISNT'T IT?
HEART AND BODY SPLIT UP, LOOKING FOR WARMTH

I'M SORRY, I'M NOT GONNA KEEP SILENT ANY LONGER.
I LOVE YOU!
LOVE!

DAMN IT ...
WHY DID I SAY THAT?
WHAT HAVE I BEEN DOING SINCE THAT DAY?

I HAD TO SAY
THAT I LOVE HER,
TO GET HER ATTENTION.
GIVE ME THE WARMTH OF YOUR BODY
COME ON
HMM
SHIN, IT'S HOT IN HERE
TURN THE AC UP
IT'S COLD...

I WANT YOU, AZUKI.

I WANT YOUR WARMTH.

Chapter One 1-2-3
DO YOU LIKE ICED TEA?
AH...
YES
I DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU WANTED BUTTERED OR CARAMEL POPCORN, SO I BOUGHT BOTH.
I'M SORRY TO HAVE KEPT YOU WAITING

HE REMEMBERED IT WELL.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANY PLANS BESIDES, I WANTED TO WATCH IT.
Yes.
I'M SORRY FOR INVITING YOU SO SUDDENLY
BUT I MANAGED TO GET THESE TICKETS YOU LIKE ANIMALS, DON'T YOU, AZUKI?
HA HA HA
I'M GLAD THERE'S NOTHING LIKE WATHING A MOVIE WITH SOMEONE
beeeeeep
MR. WAO IS KIND.

AZUKI. .
TH... THANK ...
WAS IT MAMIYA WHO MADE YOU CRY THAT DAY?

WHY
THERE WAS SUCH A WEIRD ATMOSPHERE AT THAT TIME.
AH...

OH,
THE ENDING.
Rocky,
from now on
...
we'll always,
always
be together.
Together
until death
...

ALWAYS...
...TOGETHER
CAN I DROP YOU OFF HERE?
IT'S FINE, I NEED TO GET THE RENT.
WE'LL BE IN TOUCH, WON'T WE?

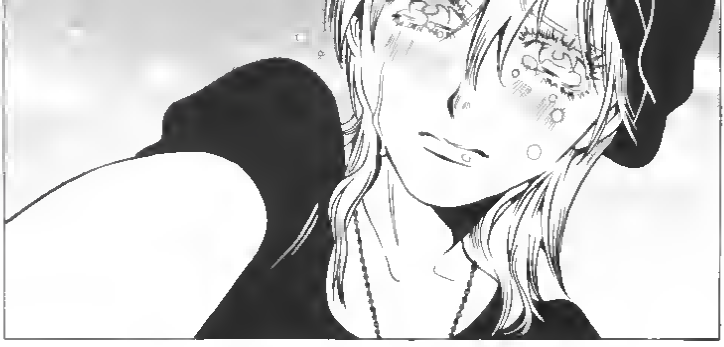
HEY,
AZUKI, WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MY GIRLFRIEND?

MR. WAO,
I...

... I...
MR SHINJURO

IN SPITE OF SAYING THAT HE LOVES ME, HE'S HANGING AROUND WITH ANYONE.
ANYONE BUT ME...
ALL RIGHT...
HURRAH!
THAT'S WHAT ONE SHOULD SAY...
SO..

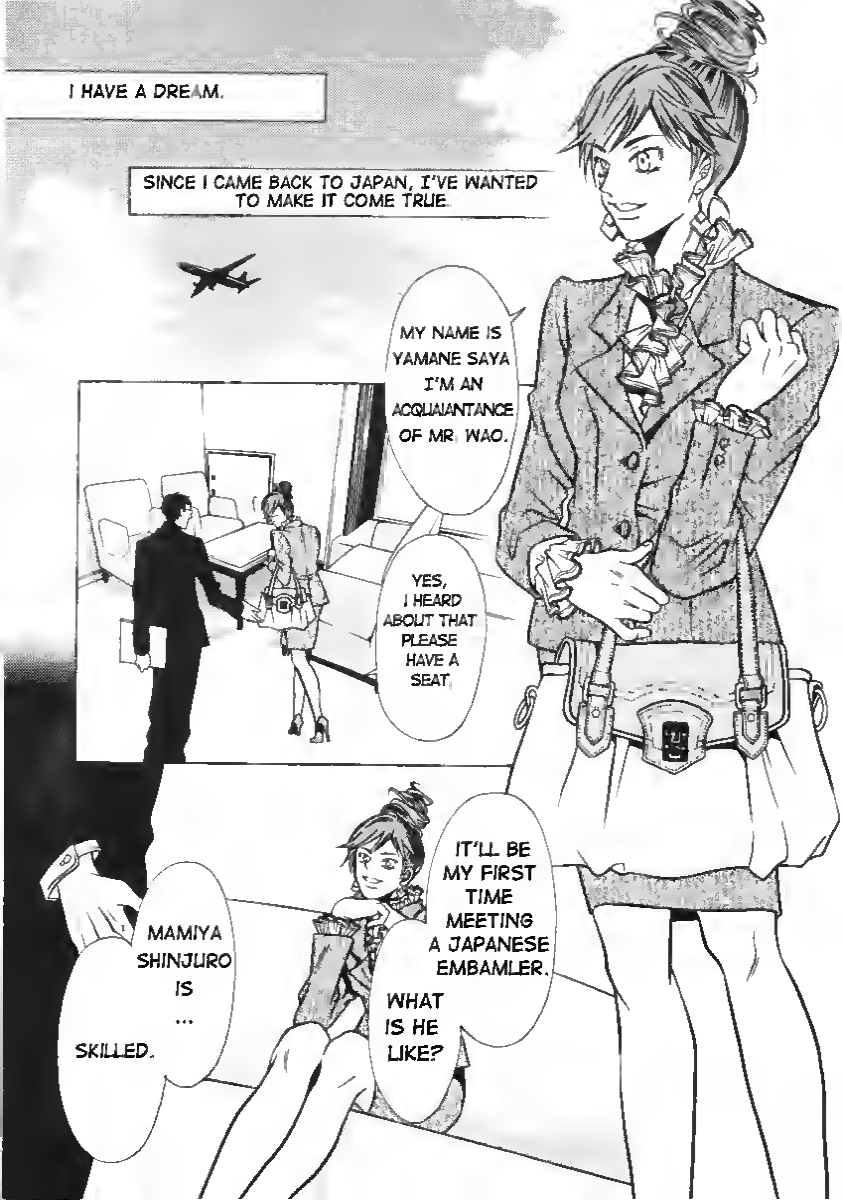
WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
LIKE I SAID EARLIER
I'LL NEVER MAKE YOU CRY.



THAT'S THE WAY...

... MR. SHINJURO "LOVES" ME.

EMBALMING 38


I HAVE A DREAM.
SINCE I CAME BACK TO JAPAN, I'VE WANTED TO MAKE IT COME TRUE.
MY NAME IS YAMANE SAYA I'M AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MR. WAO.
YES, I HEARD ABOUT THAT PLEASE HAVE A SEAT.
IT'LL BE MY FIRST TIME MEETING A JAPANESE EMBAMLER.
WHAT IS HE LIKE?
MAMIYA SHINJURO IS ... SKILLED.

?
BUT HE TENDS TO CAUSE PROBLEMS.
smooch
IT'S NOTHING
MRS YAMANE, WHY DID YOU BECOME AN EMBALMER?
I... I USED TO BE A NURSE.

HE HE
SAYA, YOU'RE BACK ALREADY.
ARE YOU ATTENDING THE AA MEETINGS?
THE ALCOHOL SURELY DAMAGED YOUR LIVER.
AT THIS RATE, YOU WILL GET AN EMPHYSEMA FROM SMOKING. YOUR HEALTH WILL DECLINE. DO YOU WANT TO BE TIED TO SUPPLEMENTAL OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR?
MR. IHARA, YOU HAVE A HIGH GGT* LEVEL.
PLEASE STOP SMOKING AND DRINKING.
HMM, I'M SO WEAK.
THAT'S WHY MY WIFE LEFT ME.
YEAH, HA HA ...

*GGT – GAMMA-GLUTAMYL TRANSFERASE, AN ENZYME INVOLVED IN AMINO ACID METABOLISM

I MUST QUIT DRINKING THIS TIME.
AND I GOT FIRED.
EVEN MY DAUGHTER ISN'T TALKING TO ME.
MRS. YAMANE!

...
GRANNY
...
WHY
...
YESTERDAY
...
SHE
...
...SHE SAID
THAT SHE'LL
COME TO MY
GRADUATION
THUD
WAAAH

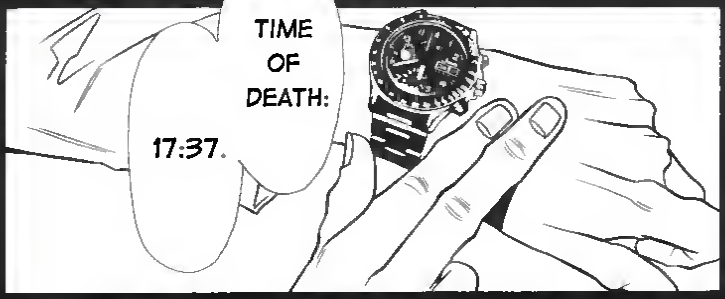
A NURSE'S JOB IS NOT ONLY TAKING CARE FOR THE LIVING.
EXCUSE ME. COULD YOU WAIT OUTSIDE FOR A MOMENT?
WE'LL DO SOMETHING TO MAKE YOUR GRANNY LOOK PRETTY.
IT'S ALSO COVERING THE DEAD'S BEDSORES AND SCARS AFTER INJECTIONS. PUTTING COTTON PADS IN THE NOSE TO PREVENT THE MUCUS FROM LEAKING.

PUTTING A SIMPLE MAKE-UP, IF THERE'S A NEED FOR IT.
IN MAJORITY IT'S THE VOLUN-TEERS WHO DO IT.
THANKS TO THE NURSES' KINDNESS, THEIR OLD COSMETICS ARE USED.
THE ENGLISH CALL IT ANGEL CARE.

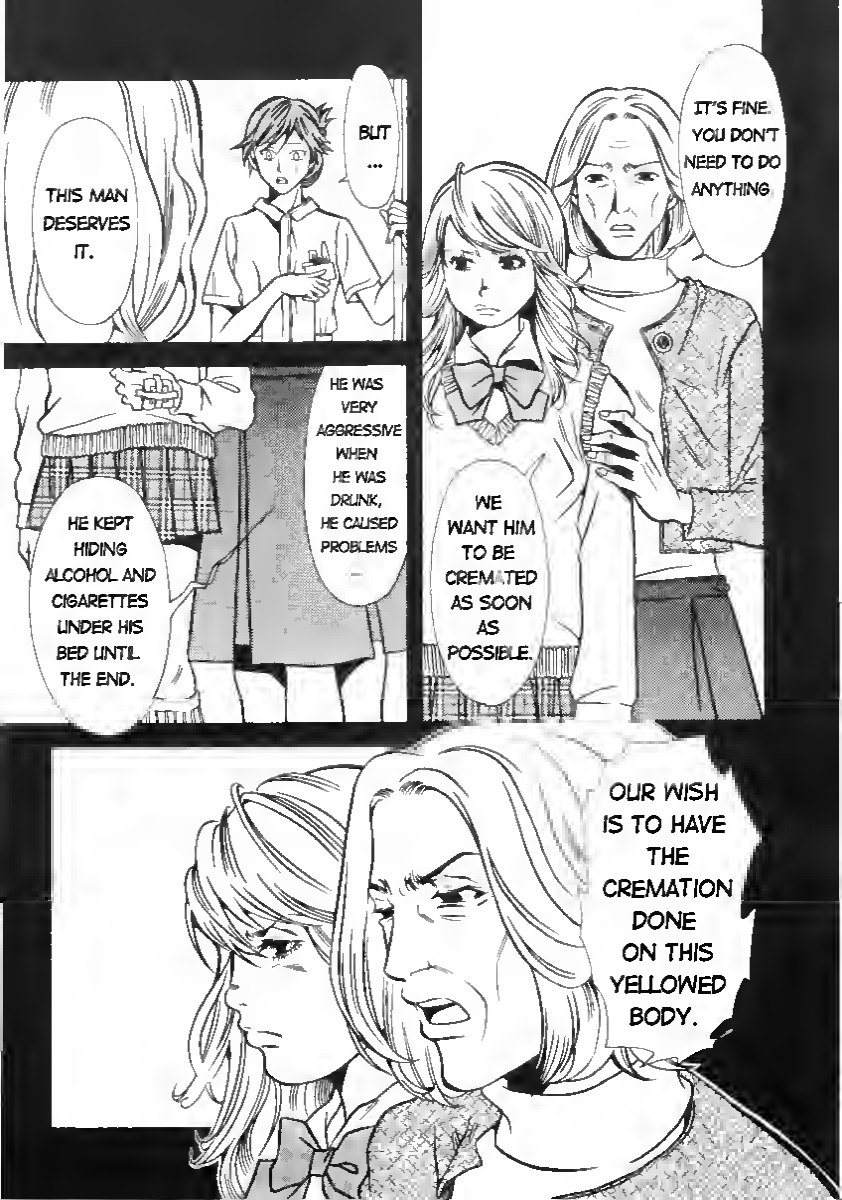
IT MAY SEEM TOO MUCH, BUT WHEN YOU SEE SO MANY TRAGIC DEATHS...
SAYA, HAVE A LOOK AT THIS.
IT'S INTERESTING, A FUNERAL WORKER LEFT THIS.
EMBALMING ...
Embalming
From healing to cure.
JEC

HOOO... THE BLOOD IS REPLACED BY AN EMBALMING FLUID?
IT PREVENTS DISEASES FROM SPREADING AND MAKES THE CORPSE LOOK PRETTY.
FA-THUD
I GUESS DOING SO MUCH ISN'T NECESSARY.

!
MRS. YAMANE! PLEASE COME TO ROOM 766 MR. IHARA'S CONDITION WORSENED SUDDENLY!



THIS MAN'S DEATH CAME TOO QUICKLY. ALCOHOL AND CIGARETTES WEAKENED HIM. IN THE END HE DIED FROM HEART FAILURE.

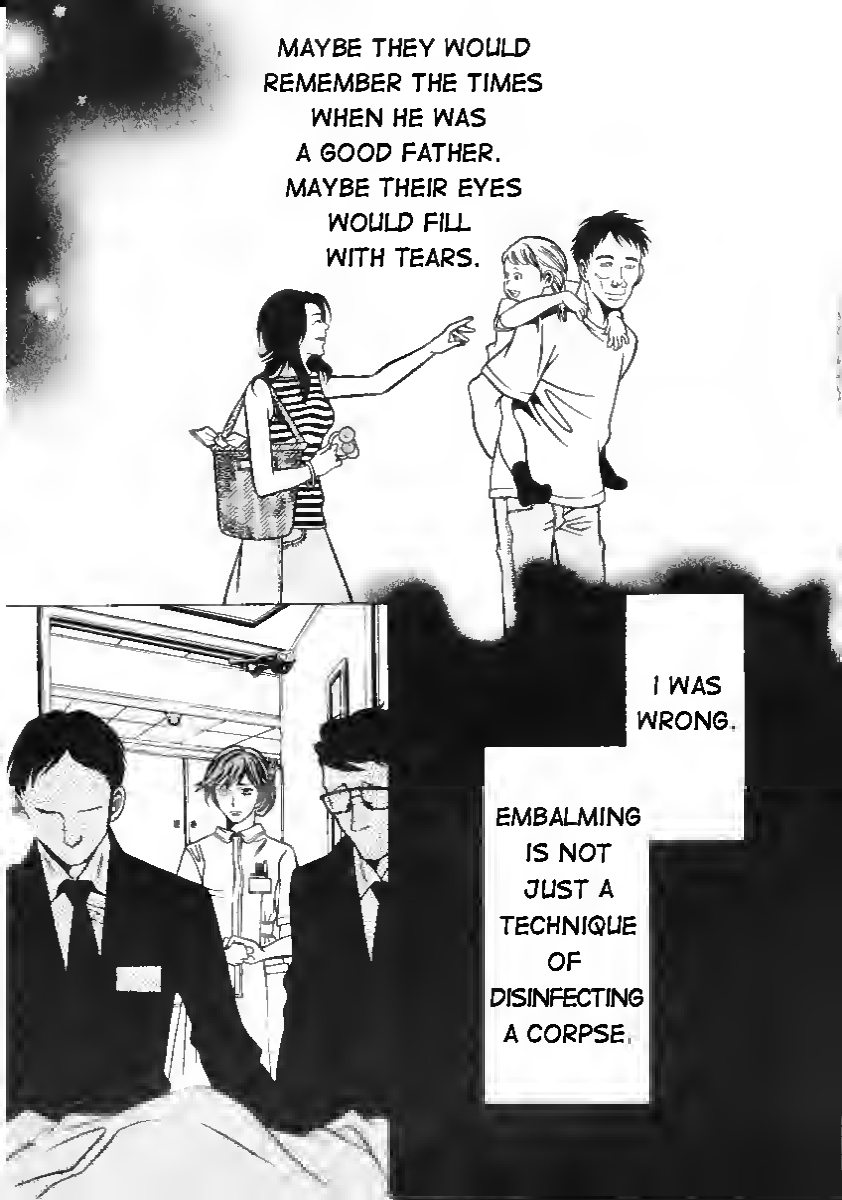

IT'S FINE. YOU DON'T NEED TO DO ANYTHING
BUT ...
THIS MAN DESERVES IT.
WE WANT HIM TO BE CREMATED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
HE WAS VERY AGGRESSIVE WHEN HE WAS DRUNK, HE CAUSED PROBLEMS ...
HE KEPT HIDING ALCOHOL AND CIGARETTES UNDER HIS BED UNTIL THE END.
OUR WISH IS TO HAVE THE CREMATION DONE ON THIS YELLOWED BODY.

WHAT IF ...

... IT WAS A FACE OF MR. IHARA BEFORE HE GOT ADDICTED TO ALCOHOL?

IF HE DIDN'T HAVE JAUNDICE,

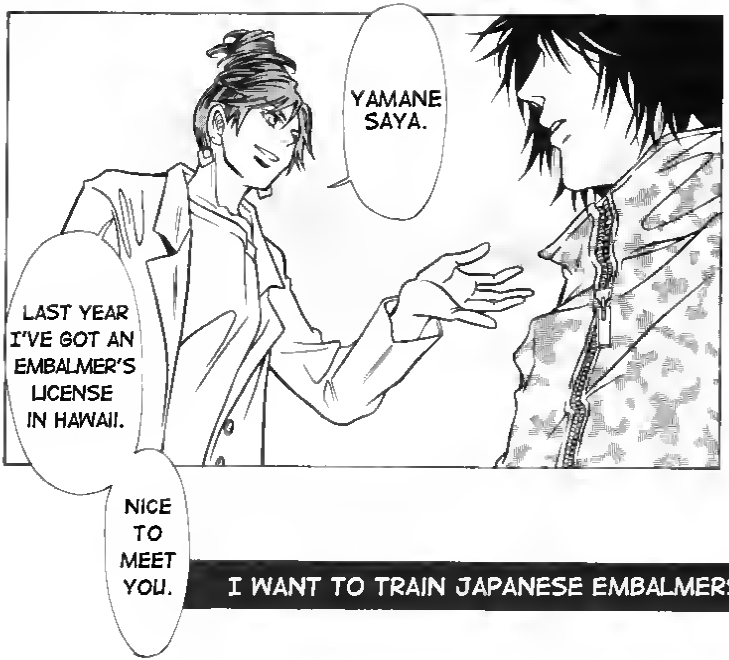
THIS MAN WOULD LOOK GENTLE, AS IF HE WAS SLEEPING.


MAYBE THEY WOULD REMEMBER THE TIMES WHEN HE WAS A GOOD FATHER. MAYBE THEIR EYES WOULD FILL WITH TEARS.
I WAS WRONG.
EMBALMING IS NOT JUST A TECHNIQUE OF DISINFECTING A CORPSE.

IT'S ALSO AN ART, THANKS TO WHICH SAYING GOODBYE IS EASIER.
ARE YOU GETTING MARRIED?
THAT'S A SHAME, YOU'VE WORKED HERE FOR 10 YEARS ...
NO.
I'M GOING TO AMERICA, I WILL STUDY EMBALMING.

I SEE.
SO YOU CAN FINALLY PRACTICE THE PROFESSION OF YOUR DREAMS.
YEAH, BUT ...
MY DREAM HAS NOT BEEN FULFILLED YET.
WHEN I CAME BACK, I THOUGHT THAT THERE ARE SO FEW JAPANESE EMBALMERS ...
AND IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE JAPANESE TOOK CARE OF THE JAPANESE.

SINCE I CAME BACK TO JAPAN, I'VE WANTED TO MAKE IT COME TRUE.



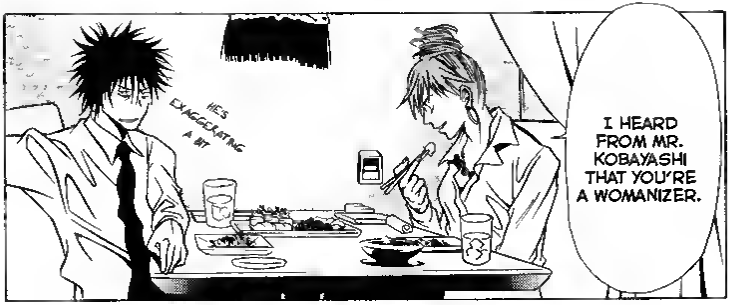
Glutaraldehyde
Furfural, 2-Furaldehyde
Acetaldehyde
Glyoxal
Path No. 2
PRESSURE VALVE
PRESSURE GAGE
CONTROL VALVE
FLOW GAGE
FLOW
PUMP
EMBALMING TANK
MACHINE
Subclavian A.
Axillary A
Brachial A.
Radial A.
Ulnar A.

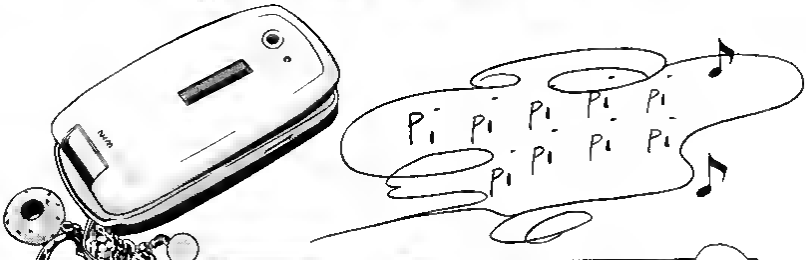
2F
4F
DINING SQUARE
カラオケ
MAMIYA. SINCE YOU HOLD YOUR DRINKS WELL, I RECOMMEND THIS ONE.
IT'S A VIETNAMESE VODKA, BUT IT SMELLS OF HAZELNUTS AND IT'S GOOD.
UH HUH.
ALL RIGHT, I'LL TAKE IT.
UNDERSTOOD.
TWO NEP MOI WITH ICE, AND HARUMAKI. THREE FLAVOURS, PLEASE.

SO...
MR. MAMIYA...
COULD WE JOIN FORCES?
YOU... WERE SERIOUS?
DON'T TELL ME YOU JUST WANTED TO HAVE A DRINK, EMBALMER TO EMBALMER?
HAHA
SLURP
THE REST WAS A LAME PICKUP LINE.
HALF SERIOUS...

MAMIYA, I WANT TO START UP AN EMBALMING SCHOOL WITH YOU.
THAT'S WHY I'D LIKE TO SET UP A SCHOOL IN OSAKA.
UH
WAIT...
HOLD ON A MINUTE.
?
AFTER THE KOBE EARTHQUAKE IN 1995, THE INTEREST IN EMBALMING INCREASED.
BUT THERE ARE SO FEW JAPANESE EMBALMERS THEY ARE LACKING...

I'M NOT AS PERFECT AS YOU THINK.
AFTER EMBALMING, I NEED A BODY'S WARMTH.
I'M DECEIVING MYSELF HAVING INTENSE, ONE-SIDED SEX.
I ALSO HAVE A REASON WHY I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE THIS CITY.
PFFFFF
...
...A GIRL?
CLANG


I HEARD FROM MR. KOBAYASHI THAT YOU'RE A WOMANIZER.
HE'S EXAGGERATING A BIT


Pi Pi Pi Pi Pi
Pi Pi Pi Pi

EXCUSE ME.
YAMANE.
UNDER-STOOD, I'M COMING RIGHT AWAY.

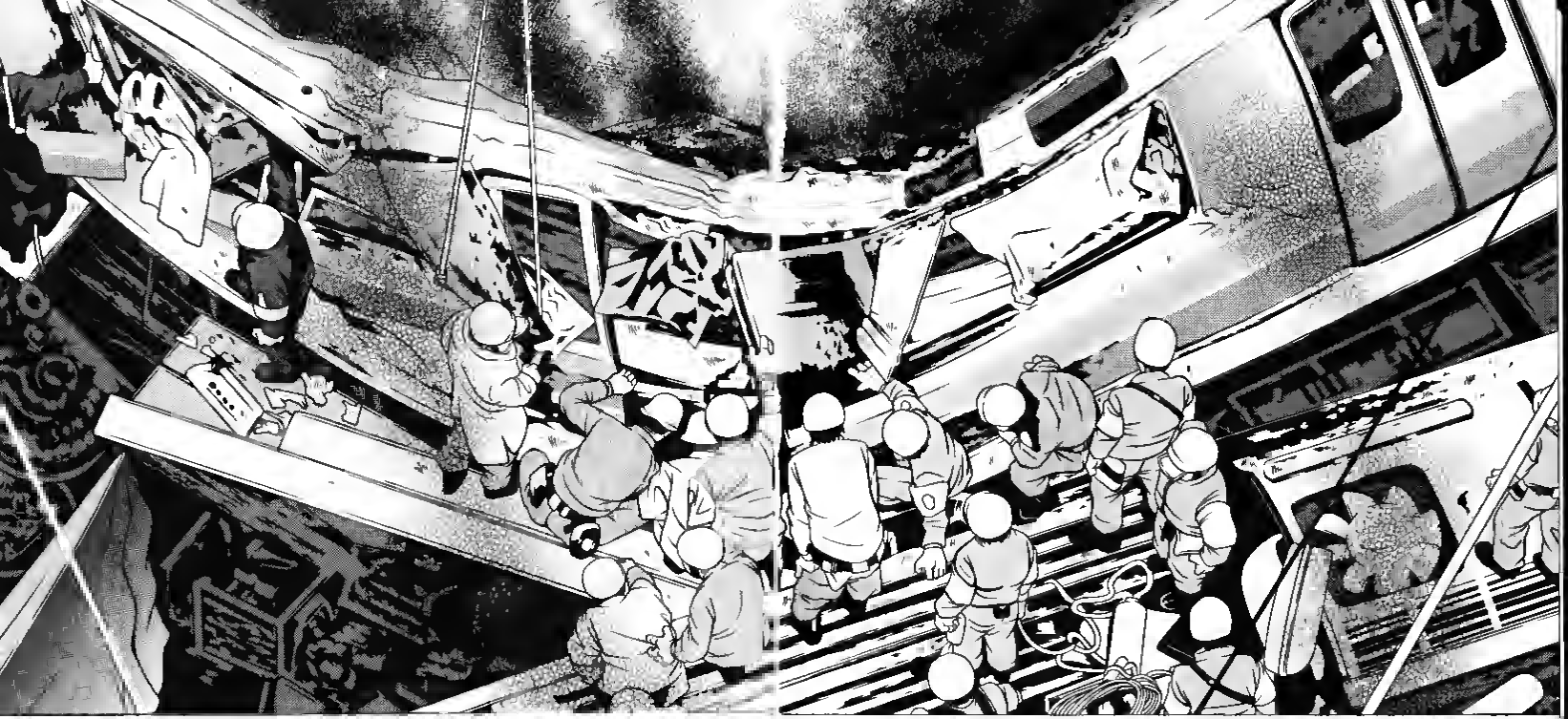
PLEASE, COME WITH ME.
WHOOSH
THERE'S BEEN A TERRIBLE ACCIDENT.
MAMIYA, WE'LL HAVE TO PUT THIS CONVER-SATION ON HOLD FOR THE TIME BEING.
THE PHONE'S RINGING WAS A HERALD OF DEATH.

MOM!
MAY I WASH THIS SWEATER AND TUNIC?
AZUKI! AZUKI, QUICK!
HM?
A TRAIN CRASHED, I SAW IT ON TV.
THUMP THUMP
AH!
!

TRAIN WRECK: 98 PEOPLE DEAD, ABOUT 500 INJURED.
LIVE
We're reporting breaking news about a train wreck.
The current verified number of fatalities is 98, including the conductor.
The number of injured has exceeded 500
The rescuers are still diligently carrying out the rescue operation
TRAIN WRECK ON LINE
WAAAH
Oooo!
Errr
HE'S PROBABLY USING A CAR.
What to do!
IS TSUKIMICHI ALL RIGHT?

IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT OR NATURAL DISASTER,

AN EMBALMER IS OBLIGED
TO REPORT TO THE SCENE WITHOUT BEING CALLED.
...
Many people are still trapped inside the train.
MR. SHINJURO SURELY WENT THERE.



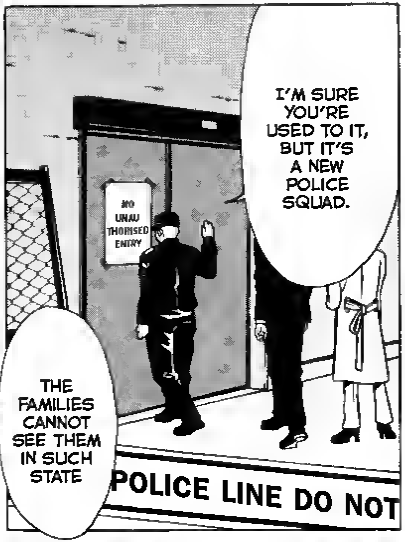
THE BODIES ARE INSIDE THE PARLIAMENT BUILDING.
NO MATTER HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE HERE IT WON'T BE ENOUGH.
WE WANT YOU TO LOOK AFTER PRESERVING CORPSES.

YOU'LL BE A BIG HELP. OTHER EMBALMERS ARE FOREIGNERS.
WE'RE EMBALMERS, MAMIYA AND YAMANE. WE'RE SORRY FOR BEING LATE.

MAMIYA, THERE'S NO USE IN STOPPING.
WE HAVE WORK TO DO.

AAAARGH!
MY MOM'S STILL IN THERE! SAVE MY MOM!

UH HUH...


I'M SURE YOU'RE USED TO IT, BUT IT'S A NEW POLICE SQUAD.
NO UNAUTHORISED ENTRY
THE FAMILIES CANNOT SEE THEM IN SUCH STATE
POLICE LINE DO NOT

DO YOUR BEST,
SO WE CAN RETURN THEM TO THEIR FAMILIES.

JAPANESE... AN EMBALMER?

Not every corpse was restored to its previous appearance.
If there were more embalming agencies...
How do you do... How's the situation?
Including you two, there are four embalmers. Embalming fluids, absorbing powder, compresses – have all run out. But the next delivery is on the way.

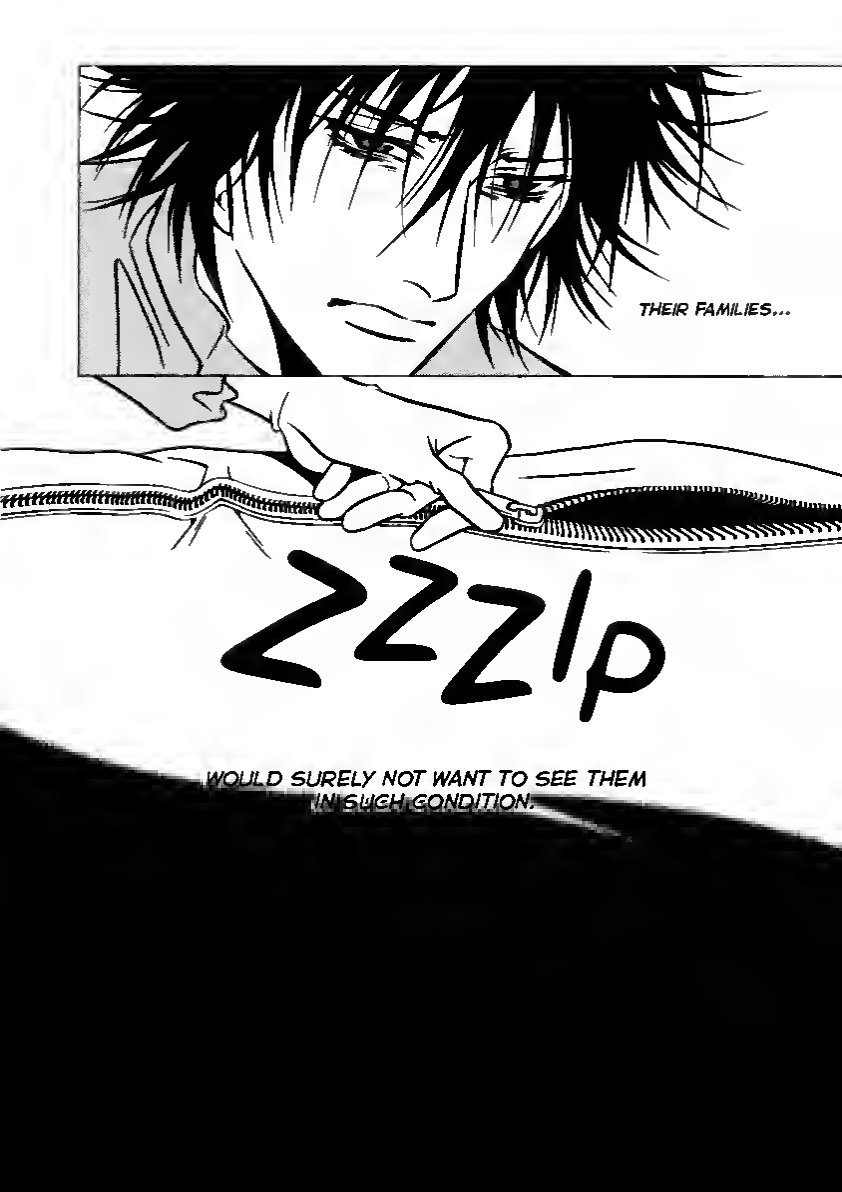
DESPITE OUR
LIMITED RECOURCES, WE'LL GIVE IT OUR BEST.
Exactly.
In Japan there still aren't enough agencies or embalmers.

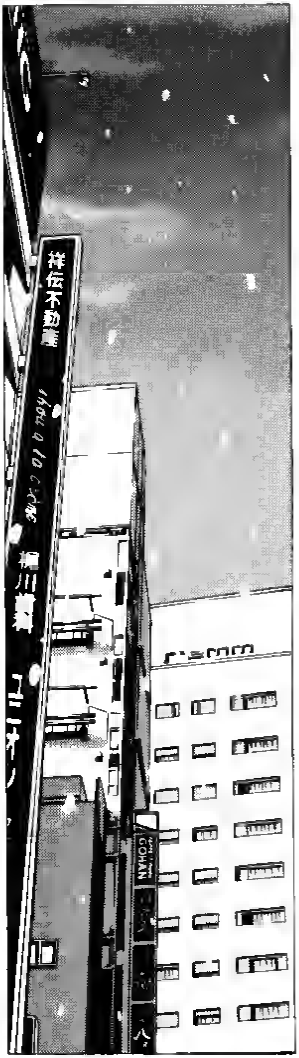
ZZz
To Nanoe
From Gaku

ジジジ
Tic Please Enjoy

CRACK

MAMIYA,
IS EVERY-THING ALL RIGHT?
HOW ABOUT YOU?
子供を探しています!
探しています
探しています


THEIR FAMILIES...
ZZZIP
WOULD SURELY NOT WANT TO SEE THEM
IN SUCH CONDITION.


祥伝不動産
Hotel La Chance
瀬川倉庫
FAMILY MART

YAMANE.
TODAY,
WHILE WORKING AT THE SCENE OF THE ACCIDENT,

THAT MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRL AND HER
THE BUSINESSMAN AND THE OFFICE LADY...
WOULD BE ABLE TO HOLD HANDS UNTIL THE END. THAT MOTHER AND HER CHILD TOO.
IF THE NUMBER OF EMBALMERS INCREASED,
I STARTED TO UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU TOLD ME.
THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO CHOOSE A DIFFERENT WAY TO SAY GOODBYE.

AH...
Huff
...
MR. SHINJURO, WELCOME HOME...
Huff
Huff
Huff

AND YOU'VE BEEN WAITING HERE ALL THIS TIME?

YAMANE,

I NEED TO THINK IT OVER.
LET'S CONTINUE WITH THIS SUBJECT.
I UNDER-STAND.
WE'LL BE IN TOUCH.
TAKE CARE.
I'LL BE GOING TOO. I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY BROTHER.
GOODNIGHT.

SLIDE
ARE YOU...

NO, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
YOU MISUN-DER...

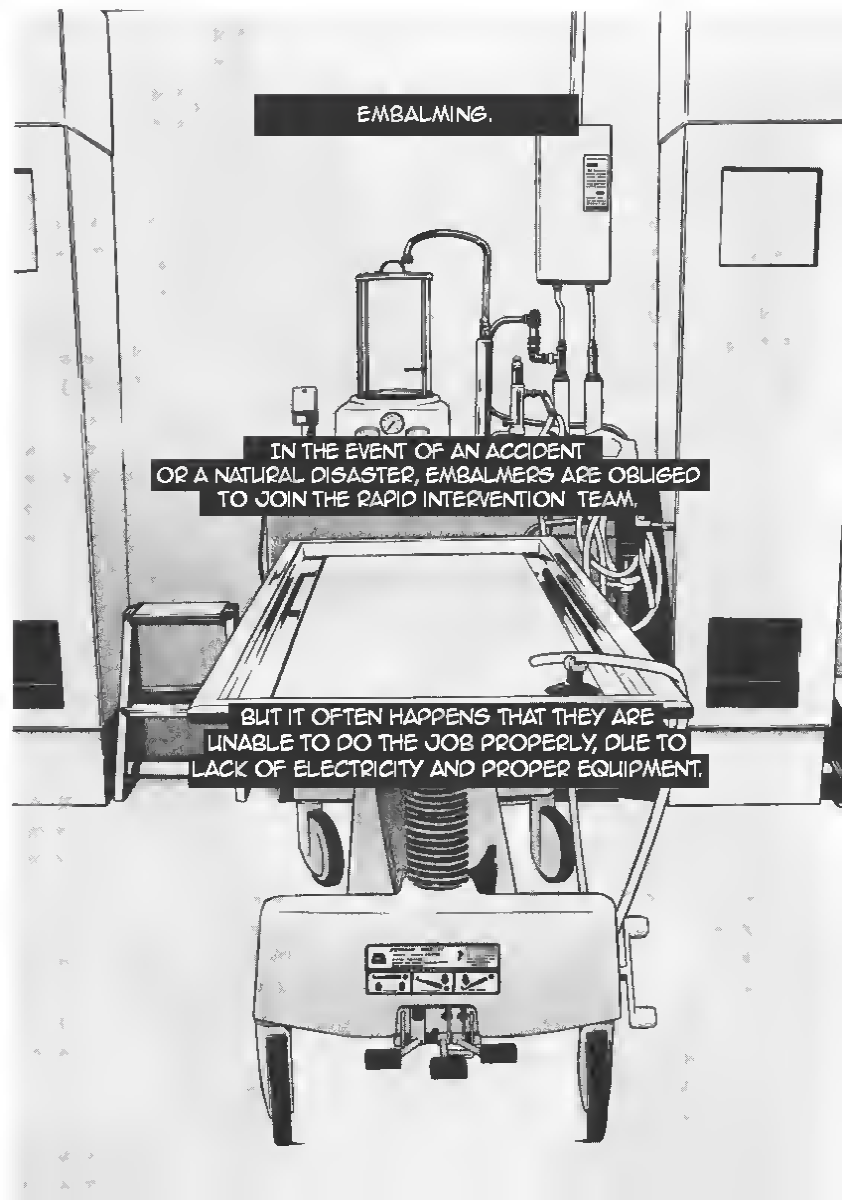
Eh?
DATING MAMIYA?

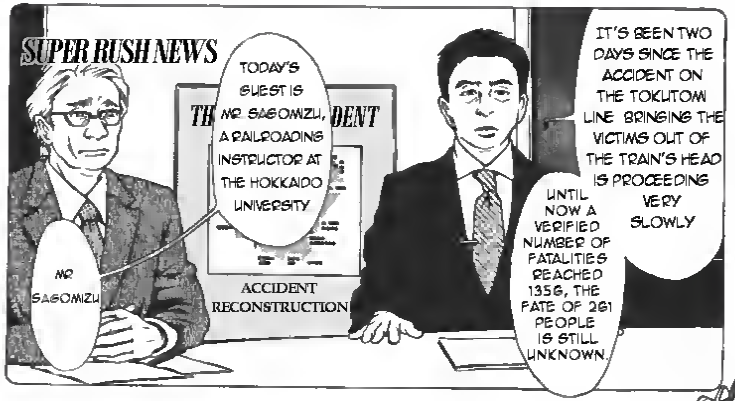
SUPPORTING AN EMBALMER CAN BE VERY HARD.
HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT IT AND DO YOU WANT TO BE WITH HIM?

YOU WILL BECOME A BURDEN FOR HIM.
...
... I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN IT IN A BAD WAY.
FORGIVE ME, BUT I CAN'T EXPRESS IT WITH OTHER WORDS.

DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT MR. SHINJURO'S FEELINGS.
I DON'T KNOW HOW HE CARRIES OUT THE EMBALMING PROCESS.
I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING.

EMBALMING 40


EMBALMING.
IN THE EVENT OF AN ACCIDENT OR A NATURAL DISASTER, EMBALMERS ARE OBLIGED TO JOIN THE RAPID INTERVENTION TEAM.
BUT IT OFTEN HAPPENS THAT THEY ARE UNABLE TO DO THE JOB PROPERLY, DUE TO LACK OF ELECTRICITY AND PROPER EQUIPMENT.


SUPER RUSH NEWS
TODAY'S GUEST IS MR. SAGOMIZU, A RAILROADING INSTRUCTOR AT THE HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY
MR SAGOMIZU
ACCIDENT RECONSTRUCTION
IT'S BEEN TWO DAYS SINCE THE ACCIDENT ON THE TOKUTOMI LINE BRINGING THE VICTIMS OUT OF THE TRAIN'S HEAD IS PROCEEDING VERY SLOWLY
UNTIL NOW A VERIFIED NUMBER OF FATALITIES REACHED 1356, THE FATE OF 261 PEOPLE IS STILL UNKNOWN.

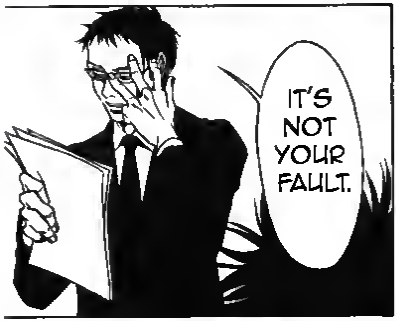
AH
THE SKIN STARTED TO PEEL OFF BECAUSE OF THOSE BODY BAGS
TOO MUCH TIME HAS PASSED

MAMIYA, HOW WAS IT?

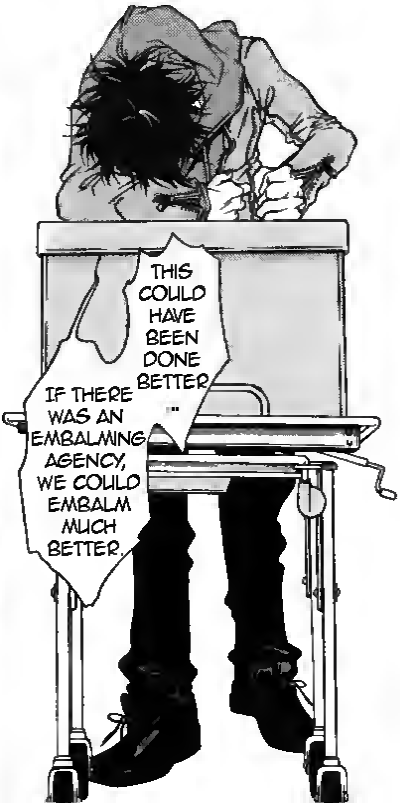
KOYUKI, TAKE RENJI'S COAT.
IT'LL BE COLD THERE.
LET'S TALK IN THE MORTUARY.
THREE PEOPLE FROM MY HOSPITAL WERE DELEGATED TO HELP.
NEXT FIVE WERE CALLED IN BY THE FUNERAL COMPANIES.
THEY DID A LOT, IN SUCH A SHORT TIME.
ONLY EIGHT PEOPLE KNEW HOW TO EMBALM?

It's better to over embalming than to under embalm body tissues.
MAMIYA...
I GET IT NOW ...
... IS NOT EVERYTHING. A BODY NEEDS PEACE MORE THAN THE EXCESS OF TREATMENT.
DOESN'T IT?
EMBAL-MING ...
AH...
MY SUPERIORS AT THE UNIVERSITY IN THE USA USED TO SAY THIS

I WANT TO START UP AN EMBALMING SCHOOL WITH YOU.


IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.

IS IT FAIR TO CALL A SHORT DELAY OF DECAY AN EMBALMING?!
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.


THIS COULD HAVE BEEN DONE BETTER...
IF THERE WAS AN EMBALMING AGENCY, WE COULD EMBALM MUCH BETTER.

LET'S HOLD UP WITH THIS SUBJECT.
BY MY OWN WEAKNESS, I CAN'T
THESE COLD HANDS.
THEY'LL LAUGH.
YOU'RE WRONG!
GRASP

SHACKLES PULLED OUT OF COLD WATER
MOM!
NO!!!
WHY YOU?!
WHY DID YOU GO TO THAT BUSINESS TRIP?
FATHER'S FACE IS IN SUCH A TERRIBLE SHAPE!!!
THIS WATCH. I GAVE IT TO HIM ON HIS BIRTHDAY!
DAD!

IT'S DAD.
JUST LIKE...
shiver
shiver
shiver
COLD HANDS ARE ...
COLD ...
... THE TEMPERATURE OF A DEAD BODY.
COLD ...
COLD ...
MAMIYA

IS THAT WHY YOU EMBRACE EVERY WOMAN EXCEPT FOR ME?
Bzz bzz
THAT'S ENOUGH!
AN EMBALMER HAS NO CHOICE
Bzz...
YES
UNDERSTOOD, I'M GOING BACK.
A CLIENT
TWO DEATHS THIS TIME.
MAMIYA!!!

I KNOW THAT HAVING A THING ABOUT WOMEN IS NOTHING WRONG
IF I WERE IN YOUR SHOES, I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO PRACTICE SUCH PROFESSION WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT
BEARING OTHER'S SADNESS AND THE FEELING OF LOSS REQUIRES LOVE AND COMPOSURE
THEY SAY THAT DEATH AWAITS US ALL
THINK ABOUT IT.
SOON YOU WILL HAVE TO CONFRONT YOURSELF WITHOUT PRETENDING
...
I'M COLD

YOU LET THE WOMAN YOU LOVE CHOOSE OTHER MAN, TOO.
I'M SURE IT'S ABOUT THAT GIRL
I TOLD YOU BEFORE, YOU HAVE TO BE NICE.
I HAVE A PATIENT WHO LOST HIS ARM.

EVERY EVENING HE SAYS:
"DOCTOR,
... MY FINGERTIPS HURT, STOP THIS PAIN, PLEASE."
AND HE SAYS ...
ARE YOUR HANDS REALLY COLD?

THE HOURGLASS OF LIFE IS CONSTANTLY RUNNING OUT OF SAND.
THAT APPLIES TO HER ...
AND YOU ...
THERE'S NO TIME FOR PAPER CHASE AND DECEIVING YOURSELF.
click
creak

AND
ME.

HOW MANY TIMES DID I LOOK UP DOING IT?
I WANTED TO SEE HIM, SO I KEPT COMING TO CLEAN UP.
I WAS WORRIED IF HE DID NOT EAT HEALTHY, SO I COOKED SOME FOOD FOR HIM.
I HOPE IT WON'T HAPPEN THIS TIME.
DING DONG
MR SHINJURO, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I BROUGHT YOU SOME ONIGIRI.

RUNNING RABBIT
HM.
WAIT!
HA HA HA
?
??
OH YEAH, HUMAN SKIN IS GREAT
I CAN'T HELP MYSELF DOING IT WHEN I'M COLD
AAA AAAA

I'D LIKE TO HAVE A CHAT WITH YOU.
IT'S COLD OUTSIDE, LET'S DRINK SOME TEA.
PLEASE...
LET ME HOLD YOU FOR A LITTLE. I PROMISE I WON'T TRY ANYTHING.

MY FIRST TIME WITH A WOMAN WAS THE DAY MY MOTHER DIED.
...
I WAS IMAGINING THINGS?
IS THAT IT?
THAT WARMTH HELPED ME FOR A WHILE, BUT...
SO THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF?
IT'S LIKE A PHANTOM PAIN
...
... SINCE THAT DAY, MY HANDS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN...
EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE SO COLD?

I CHANGED MY BEHAVIOR...
...I USED TO WATCH, PRETENDING I'M NOT LOOKING...
IS THAT THE PRICE I HAVE TO PAY?
AZUKI
...

...
AAH ...
I'M WARM NOW. THIS PLACE'S COFFEE IS THE BEST.
IT'S SO COLD TODAY, WHY ARE WE OUTSIDE?
YOU CAN PERFECTLY SEE EVERYONE FROM THIS SPOT
THOSE WHO ARE ALIVE
AND THOSE STRUGGLING AT THE HOSPITAL
AND THOSE WHO FLEW UP TO WHERE WE CAN'T GO.

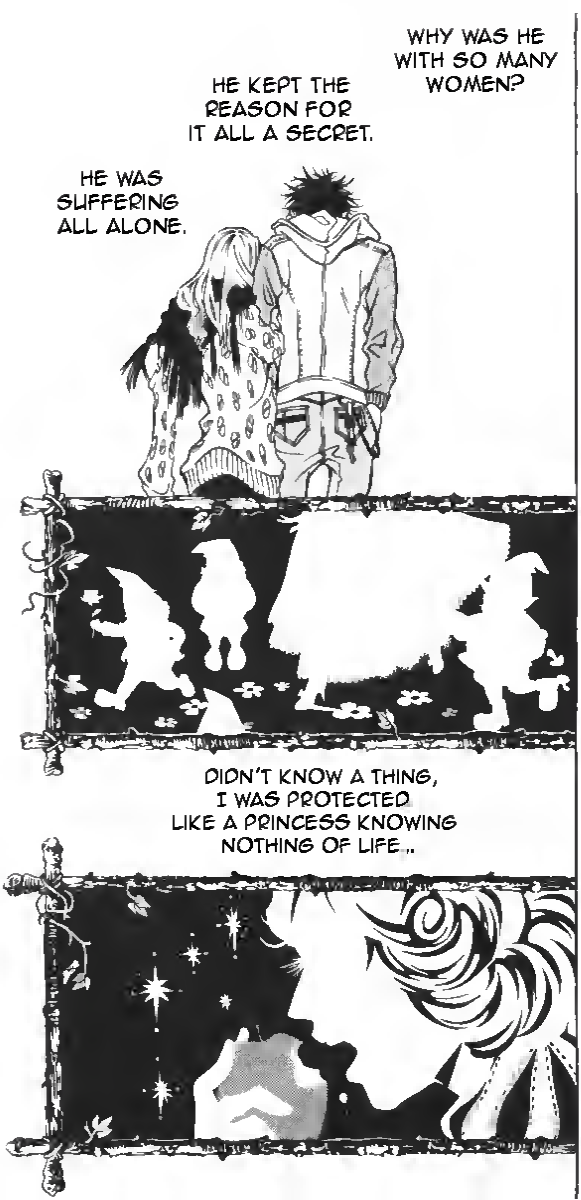
YOU REALLY KNEW NOTHING
Cough
cough
IT'S NOTHING LIKE THAT WE ARE SHARING AN UNAVOIDABLE PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP
PFFF
YOU PROBABLY THINK THAT I'M ONE OF MAMIYA'S LOVERS
DO YOU KNOW THE REASON WHY THIS LOSER'S PLAYING THE FIELD?
Cough
waaah
kyaaah
REASON?
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW?
AAH ...
IT'S GOING TO BE A DIFFICULT CHAT.

THUMP
THUMP
ARE YOU BRAVE ENOUGH TO HEAR MORE?

THERE ARE MANY SIDES OF MR. SHINJURO I DON'T KNOW.

IF I DON'T GET
TO KNOW MORE,

I WON'T BE ABLE
TO MOVE FORWARD.


WHY WAS HE WITH SO MANY WOMEN?
HE KEPT THE REASON FOR IT ALL A SECRET.
HE WAS SUFFERING ALL ALONE.
DIDN'T KNOW A THING, I WAS PROTECTED LIKE A PRINCESS KNOWING NOTHING OF LIFE...

MRS. KOYUKI'S STORY TRULY SHOCKED ME.

IT WOULD SURELY GET STUCK IN MY THROAT..
...
...
THERE IS SOMETHING THAT NEITHER EMBALMERS NOR DOCTORS CAN DO
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS?

IT'S HARD.
THIS POISON MADE ME SPEECHLESS.
THEY CAN'T BRING THE WARMTH BACK TO THE DEAD.

IF I DON'T WITHDRAW,
I'LL HAVE TO CONFRONT IT.
IT'S FRIGHTENING THAT HE CAN'T RAISE HIS BODY TEMPERATURE EVEN FOR ONE NIGHT
HAVE I KNOWN ABOUT IT UNTIL NOW?
YOU CAN'T BE MY PRINCE CHARMING. IN THAT CASE...
sniff
sniff

HE'S A PRINCE I CAN EXPECT NOTHING FROM...
sob sob
STUPID, PERMANENTLY DECEIVED SNOW WHITE.
PATHETIC LITTLE MERMAID, BETRAYED BY A MAN.
THUMBELINA, WHOSE LIVE GOES ON IDLY.
I FIT THEM.
IS THAT IT?

WHEN I THOUGHT ABOUT HOW HE'S BEEN STRUGGLING ALONE FOR SO MANY YEARS,
TEARS STARTED FLOWING DOWN MY CHEEKS
AND THEY COULDN'T STOP.
...HE DIDN'T TELL ME?
IS THAT WHY ...
I DIDN'T REALIZE.

NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY MY "LOVE" AND HIS "LOVE" ARE NOT THE SAME.
IT'S HOPELESS.
I CRIED.
AZUKI, THE PHONE.
IT'S MR. WAO.
HERE YOU ARE...
woosh
WAIT!

WAO WAO! YOU DIDN'T TELL ME THAT YOU WERE ON A DATE WITH AZUKI.
YOU LIAR!
IF IT'S SEX YOU WANT, I'LL MIX YOU WITH ARABIC GUM AND STEVIA, AND SWEATEN SOME CANDIES!
AM I WRONG OR SOME-THING?
SO WHAT DO YOU WANT?
POW
IT'S AZUKI.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE WE TALKED. UH HUH
YES
ME TOO.
I'D LIKE TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT SOMETHING IMPORTANT TOO ..
WOOOOO WOOOOO WOOOOO
O! O! YOU'RE IN THE WAY
SATURDAY? SURE
8 PM .. OK

I HAVE TO MOVE FORWARD.
PLEASE FOLLOW ME, MR. WAO.
THIS PLACE IS WONDERFUL
HA HA
HIROSHIMA YAKI IS GREAT TOO, BUT I GUESS THEY DON'T HAVE IT HERE
WOULD YOU LIKE SOME CHAMPAGNE, AZUKI?
AH, YES PLEASE

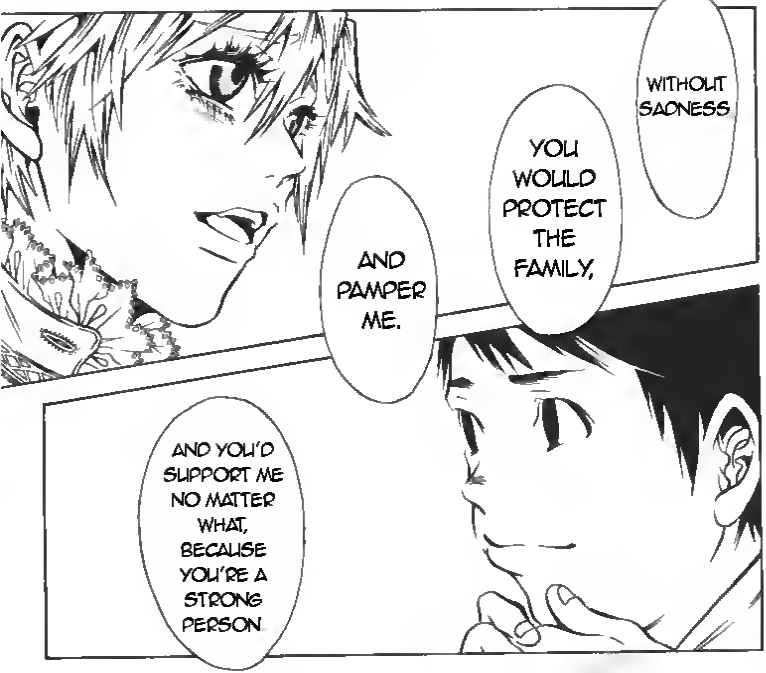
HE INSISTED THAT HE WOULD GO WITH ME, BUT I LOST HIM ON MY WAY HERE
TSUKIMICHI WAS SCARY
PIPER-HEIDSIECK
HA HA
AZUKI WHERE ARE YOU?
AZUKI ?!!
HA HA
HE ALWAYS THINKS THAT
HE KNOWS BETTER ABOUT WHAT OTHERS WANT.
HE'S A COOL GUY, BUT...
YEAH.
THUMP THUMP

PSHHH
THIS TYPE OF CHAMPAGNE IS SERVED DURING THE CANNES FILM FESTIVAL
WOOM WOOM
HE
AZUKI, I'M TELLING YOU THIS BECAUSE YOU LIKE MOVIES.
PIPER-HEIDSECK BRUT
I WILL OPEN IT MYSELF.
A HA HA HA
TSUKIMICHI IS OBSESSED WITH YOU.

CHEERS.
clang
IT'S NOT GLUED TO THE GLASS.
PLEASE LISTEN TO ME.
THAT TIME YOU ANSWERED ME..
EH?

BEING WITH YOU ...
... WOULD BE WONDER-FUL.

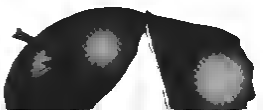
AZUKI, WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE MY GIRLFRIEND?


WITHOUT SADNESS
YOU WOULD PROTECT THE FAMILY,
AND PAMPER ME.
AND YOU'D SUPPORT ME NO MATTER WHAT, BECAUSE YOU'RE A STRONG PERSON

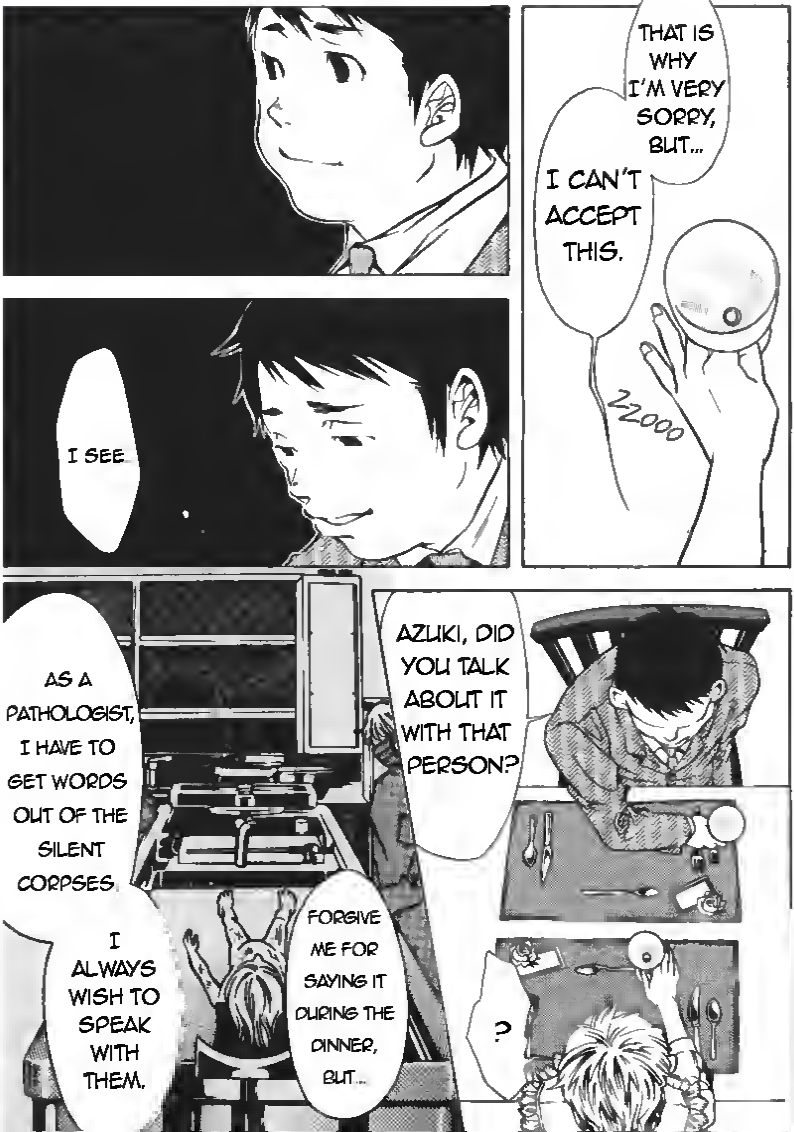
MAYBE I'M MAKING A MISTAKE...

MAYBE IT WON'T BE POSSIBLE...

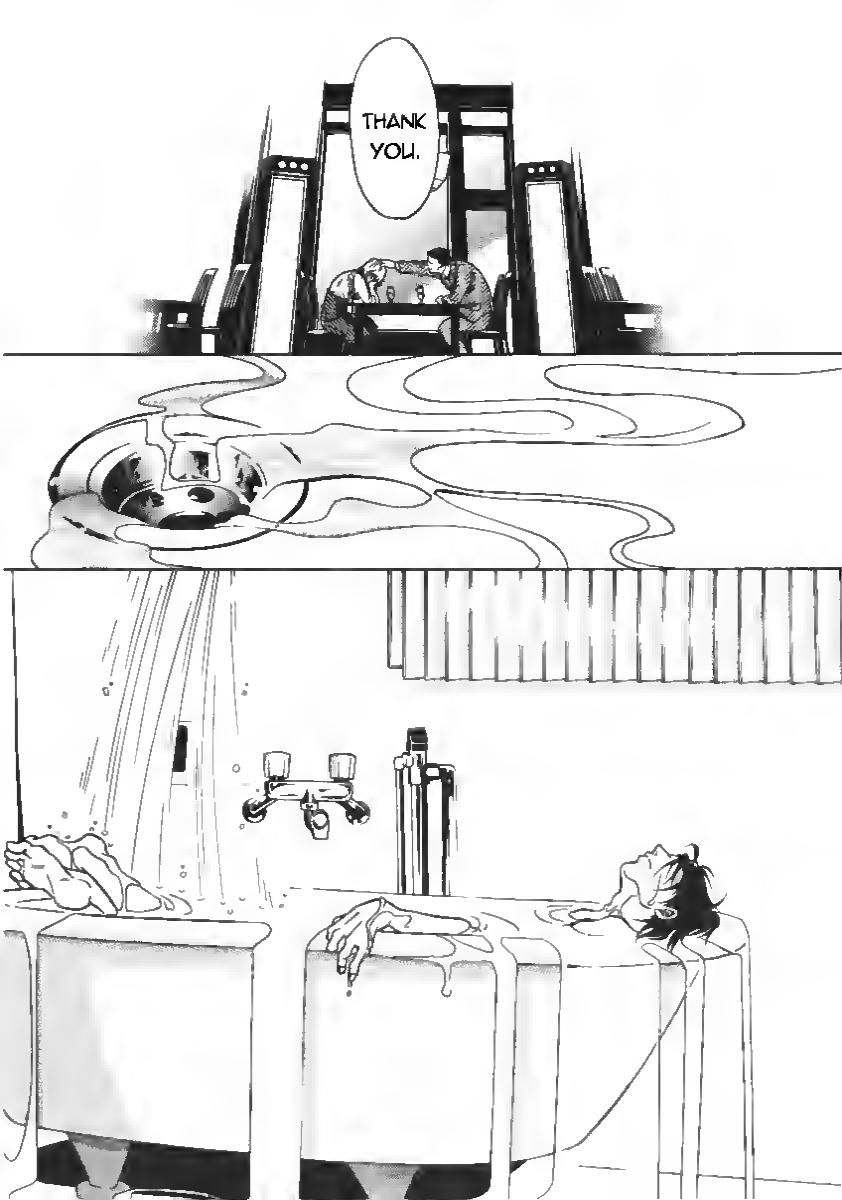
BUT I ...



EVEN THOUGH...
EVEN IF IT WILL BE HARD,
AND EVEN IF I WON'T GET REWARDED ...
THERE'S SOMEONE I WANT TO SUPPORT.


THAT IS WHY I'M VERY SORRY, BUT...
I CAN'T ACCEPT THIS.
ZZOOO
I SEE.
AZUKI, DID YOU TALK ABOUT IT WITH THAT PERSON?
AS A PATHOLOGIST, I HAVE TO GET WORDS OUT OF THE SILENT CORPSES.
FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING IT DURING THE DINNER, BUT...
I ALWAYS WISH TO SPEAK WITH THEM.
?

KIND WORDS
YES ...
THAT'S WHY IT'S BETTER TO SHARE WORDS WITH OTHERS WHEN YOU STILL HAVE A CHANCE
I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT
SO, I'LL BE GOING ..
OH NO NO, PLEASE WAIT
YOU BROKE IT OFF WITH ME AND YOU'RE SAYING "GOODBYE", BUT I'M NOT A CHILD
AT LEAST EAT THE DINNER WITH ME, AZUKI.
grasp
IT'S A GREAT AND EXPENSIVE FRENCH RESTAURANT AFTER ALL!


THANK YOU.

FROM ALL OF MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES, I CAN'T RECALL EVEN ONE WHERE SOMEONE HUGGED ME
MY WEAKENED MOTHER DIDN'T DO IT.
FATHER CARED ONLY ABOUT WORK.
SHHHH
IT'S COLD ...
WRONG...
DID I REPRESS SUCH MEMORISES?

I WILL NOT...

I NEED TO END THIS BY MYSELF.

...BEG ANYMORE.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, MR. NATSUI.
I'M GOING TO LEAVE THIS CHURCH.
FORGIVE ME FOR NOT KEEPING MY PROMISE.
I'D RATHER GIVE UP...
...ON ANY OTHER SOURCE OF HEAT.
I CAN'T GIVE UP ON HOPING.
MAYBE I'LL BE ABLE TO FEEL THAT GIRL'S WARMTH SOMEDAY

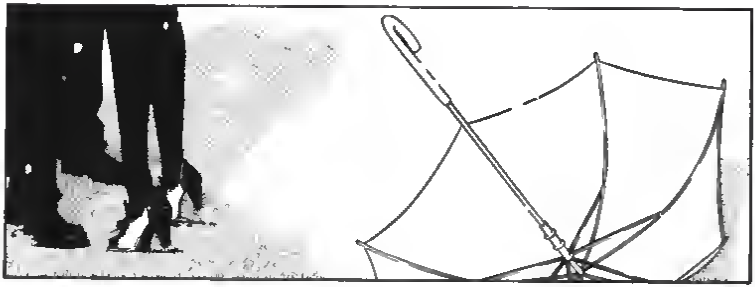
I'VE SEEN TOO MUCH DEATH.
MAYBE I'M STARTING TO CONTEMPLATE.
IF I COULD GET THE SAME LOVE I COULD GIVE.
IF SHE WOULDN'T MIND MY WEAKNESS...
I DIDN'T NOTICE SUCH AN OBVIOUS THING.
JUST THIS ONCE...

IT'S GRANDPA'S BIRTHDAY.
YOU CAME TO VISIT THE GRAVE ALONE?
WHAT ...
YOU ...
MY VOICE IS BREAKING UP...
MR SHINJURO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
IT'S NOT GRANDPA'S DEATHDAY
THAT'S MY LINE. YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID TO BE ALONE TO A GRAVEYARD

THUMP
I WANT TO REMEMBER HIS BIRTHDAY MORE THAN HIS DEATHDAY.
IT MAKES ME HAPPY,
BECAUSE IF I FORGET THAT HE WAS BORN AND LIVED,
IT'D BE AS IF HE DIED TWICE.

grasp
MR. SHINJURO
MANY YEARS HAVE PASSED, AND IT LOOKS LIKE I DIDN'T LEARN A THING.
WHY DO YOU ... ALWAYS ... ALWAYS ...
ONLY SAY THINGS THAT TOUCH MY HEART?

THAT'S WHY ...
I WILL NOT GIVE UP ON YOU!



AS IF WE WERE GOING
TO DIE THE NEXT DAY...

AGAIN, AGAIN,
AND AGAIN...

VORACIOUSLY...

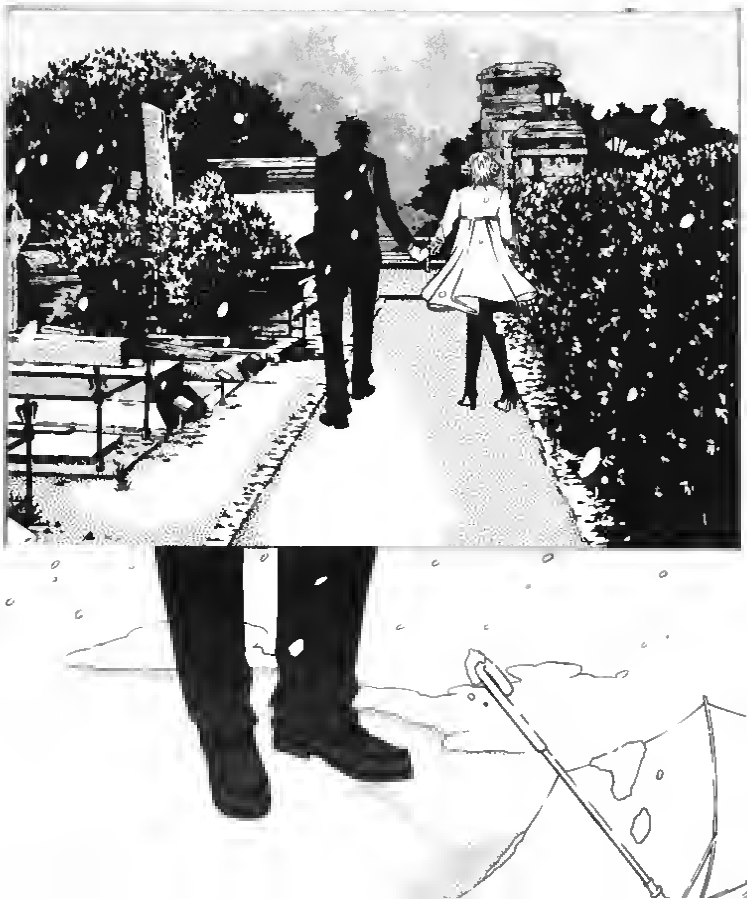
THAT'S HOW WE KISSED.

EMBALMING FINAL

huff
huff
huff

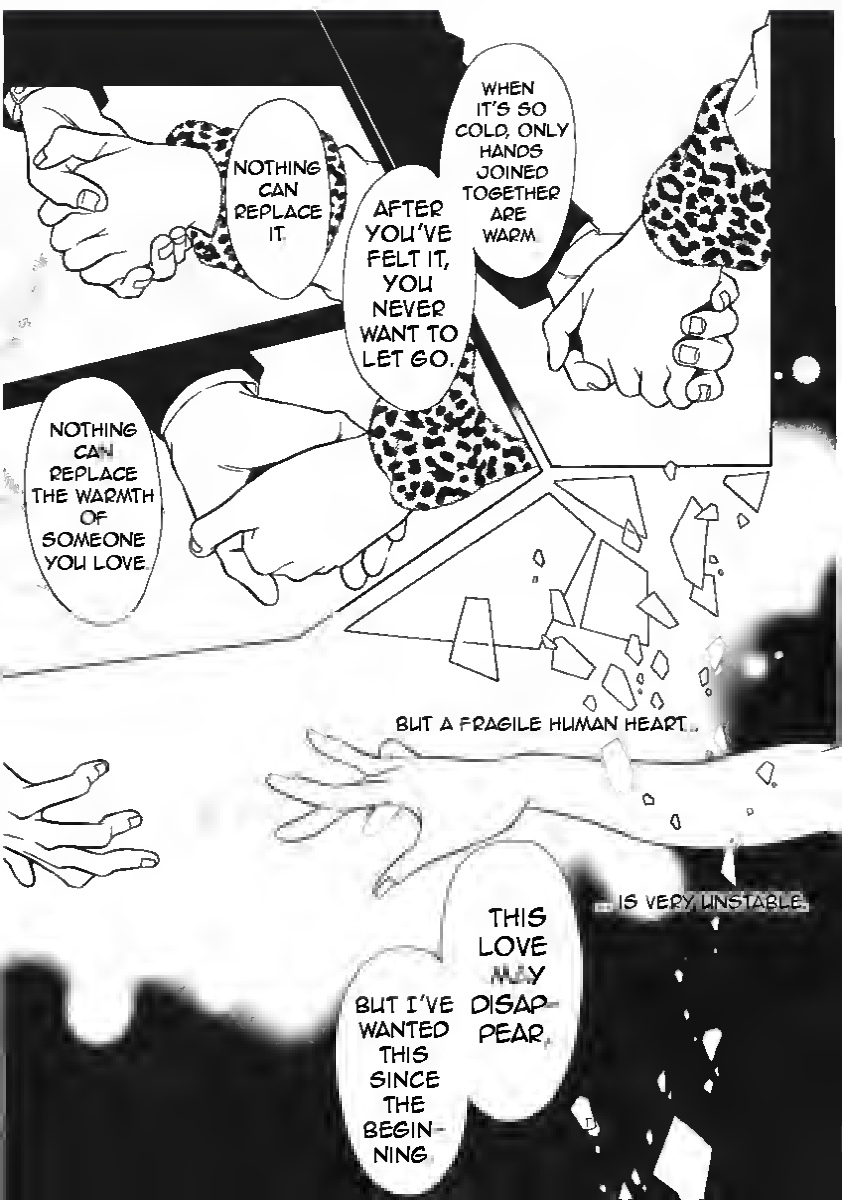
AZUKI ...
I'M SORRY ...
DON'T APOLOGIZE!
YOU CAN'T DO THAT.
THAT WOULD MAKE ME UNHAPPY.
SHINJURO ...

TAKE MY HAND.



SHINJURO
MRS KOYUKI TOLD ME EVERY-THING.
THE REASON WHY YOU SLEPT WITH DIFFERENT GIRLS
ABOUT HOW YOU'VE SUFFERED ALONE EACH TIME YOU EMBAMLED SOMEONE.
AND MANY OTHER THINGS
...
I SEE.

WHY COULDN'T I BE THE ONE TO WARM YOUR HANDS?
BUT SHE DIDN'T TELL ME WHAT I WANTED TO HEAR THE MOST
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT. IT'S SOMETHING I HAVEN'T NOTICED BEFORE, SOMETHING UNIMPORTANT
I GUESS...
KOYUKI IS NASTY
DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWER NOW?
UHUM.


NOTHING CAN REPLACE IT.
AFTER YOU'VE FELT IT, YOU NEVER WANT TO LET GO.
WHEN IT'S SO COLD, ONLY HANDS JOINED TOGETHER ARE WARM.
NOTHING CAN REPLACE THE WARMTH OF SOMEONE YOU LOVE.
BUT A FRAGILE HUMAN HEART...
...IS VERY UNSTABLE.
THIS LOVE MAY DISAP-PEAR.
BUT I'VE WANTED THIS SINCE THE BEGIN-NING

MRS. YAMANE SAID THAT SUPPORTING AN EMBALMER IS HARD.
BUT,
DID SHE FORESEE ALL OF IT?
THERE IS ONE THING I'M SURE OF.
WHEN I FINALLY TAKE YOUR HAND,
I WON'T LET GO OF YOU EVEN WHEN WE GET OLD.

I DON'T LOVE YOU ONLY WHEN EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT.
IF YOU'RE COLD, I'LL WARM YOU ...
YOU CAN CRY ON MY SHOULDER ...
THE MORE WE'RE APART,
THE MORE WE'LL GRASP EACH OTHER'S HANDS ...
THAT'S WHAT "I LOVE YOU" MEANS TO ME.
I DON'T WANT YOU TO BE LEFT ALL ALONE.

THAT IS WHY
YOU WILL NOT BE ALONE,
BECAUSE I WILL HOLD YOU,
AND YOU WILL NOT SUFFER
ANYMORE.

WILL I BE ABLE TO FORGIVE MYSELF?
WILL YOU FORGIVE ME?

IT'S BEEN HARD UNTIL NOW.
AT SUCH MOMENTS YOU CAN CRY, SHINJURO.

IRIS

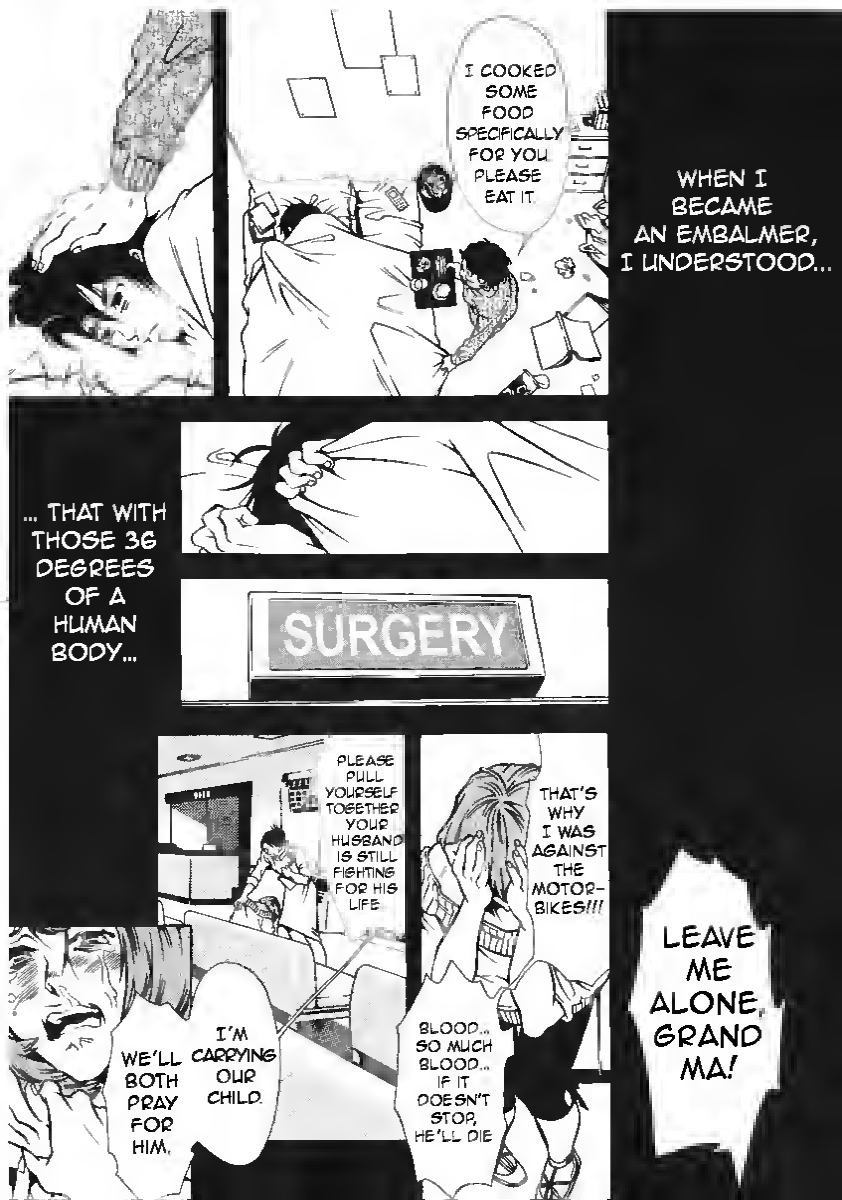
AZUKI!
?
YES?
?
?
DO YOU HAVE TO WORK?
THERE'S NO MESS AT MY HOUSE.
I'M NOT HUNGRY.
SO YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO DO HERE!
THINK ABOUT IT A BIT

I DON'T WANT TO LET GO OF YOU...
... UNTIL TOMOR-ROW MORNING.
HEY...
WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
AZUKI!

HMM...
THUMP THUMP
EH?
AZUKI,
I'VE DECIDED
SHINJURO
GOOD MORNING, YOU GOT UP EARLY...
I'M GOING TO START UP AN EMBALMING SCHOOL WITH MRS. YAMANE
WAIT!
AND AFTER THAT...
I'LL HAVE TO REMOVE ALL THE EQUIPMENT FROM HERE.

SHINJURO, YOU IMBECILE!
BANG
OUCH.
CRACK
I... WANT...
SHINJURO, I TRULY WANT TO SUPPORT YOU.
BUT DIDN'T YOU SAY THAT YOU'D BE WITH ME FOR-EVER?
LISTEN UNTIL I'M DONE.
IN LINE WITH MR TSUKIMINE'S LAST WILL, AND FOR YOU TO HAVE A HAPPY WEDDING,
IN THE CHURCH THERE WILL BE A GATE OF FLOWERS,

OOOH
WAAH
WAAAAAH
YOU'RE AWFUL
YOU AND ME.


I COOKED SOME FOOD SPECIFICALLY FOR YOU. PLEASE EAT IT.
WHEN I BECAME AN EMBALMER, I UNDERSTOOD...
... THAT WITH THOSE 36 DEGREES OF A HUMAN BODY...
SURGERY
PLEASE PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER. YOUR HUSBAND IS STILL FIGHTING FOR HIS LIFE.
THAT'S WHY I WAS AGAINST THE MOTOR-BIKES!!!
LEAVE ME ALONE, GRANDMA!
I'M CARRYING OUR CHILD.
WE'LL BOTH PRAY FOR HIM.
BLOOD... SO MUCH BLOOD... IF IT DOESN'T STOP, HE'LL DIE

DING
DING
325 YEN.
98 YEN.
THANK YOU.
DING DONG.
DING DONG.
43 LEFT
AAH
WELCOME!
I WANT TO DIE.
I DON'T CARE, I'LL QUIT MY JOB.
... EVEN IF YOU'RE UNAWARE OF IT...
AWESOME! AWESOME! REALLY AWESOME!
ほむ
YANDERE OMELETTES ARE HALF PRICE!
YES, MASTER.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

A HEALTHY BOY.
ONE YEAR LEFT
... YOU SURELY CAN SAVE SOMEONE.

YOU CAN WARM
SOMEONE'S HEART

JUST BY LIVING.

TO BE LATE FOR YOU OWN WEDDING!!!
Lovely!
OH COME ON, TSUKIMCHI
I'm sure he's stuck in traffic
Welcom Weddi
SO! MAYBE... WE CAN FORGET ABOUT IT!
29 MINUTES
27 MINUTES
IT'S NOT TOO LATE, SO LET'S JUST FORGET ABOUT IT!
IT IS TOO LATE
THE DIE HAS BEEN CAST, SO GIVE IT UP.
UNCLE, DID YOU MAKE THOSE DRAGEES?
They are fantastic
HA HA
NATSUI MADE THEM, SO THEY LOOK LIKE MOTHRA'S COCOON
KYAA
STOP!
NO!
HOW IN THE WORLD ARE THOSE SWEETS AND MOTHRA ALIKE?!
Does "dragee" sound like a monster's name?
HMM.
HO HO

SOME-
HOW
IT'S NOT
VERY
EASY TO
FOLD.
MAMIYA
HAS DEALT
WITH HIS
PROBLEM
I SHOULD
MOVE
FORWARD
TOO.
WHAT'S
THAT?
A
LETTER
TO
HEAVEN.

HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
BANG
AZUKI! I'M LAT...

WEL-
COME
HOME
YOU
MUST
HAVE
WORKED
HARD.

I'M BACK.
...
WHAT?
AH...
WHA...?
SO SHOW ME YOUR LEG, AZUKI.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
JUST LIKE SHIORI'S ...
A GARTER ...

IF THE BRIDE WEARS SOMETHING BLUE, IT'LL BRING HER GOOD LUCK.
SOMETHING BLUE
DO YOU REMEMBER?
PLEASE SEND MY REGARDS TO MAMIYA.
THANK YOU FOR THE WEDDING DRESS
YEAH.
SHINJURO?

YES.
ONLY BY LIVING
YOU CAN DO IT
WARM...

HOW LOVELY! THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS ARE FALLING!
Azuki looks gorgeous.
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN SOMEONE THROWING CANDIES SO HARD
"AN OLDER BROTHER'S FEROCIOUSLY HARD BALL-STONES."
YES YES
AZUKI
BROTHER!
OUCH!
IT HURTS
BAM
BAM
AZUKI!
Noooooo!
There there, you'll get a candy.
FORGIVE MY HARSH WORDS.
BE HAPPY.
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME IF ANYTHING HAPPENS
THANK YOU.
YOU BE HAPPY TOO.

OLD MEM-ORIES .. DARLING ..
SHIN...
WHAT IS IT?

I'M SURE I COULD NOT.
HOW ABOUT YOU?
YOU GOT YOUR LICENSE, DIDN'T YOU?
WHY ELSE WOULD I BE HERE?
OH ...
HEY CHANG, LET ME HEAR YOUR ANSWER NOW, FINALLY ..
DO YOU THINK YOU COULD EMBALM SOMEONE YOU LOVE?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT, HUH?

I HAVE MANY WEAKNESSES
AND EVEN IF I WORKED HARD
MY WHOLE LIFE,
I GUESS I WILL NEVER BE
THE KIND OF EMBALMER
MY FATHER WAS.

TO BE A HUMANE EMBALMER.

THAT IS MY WISH AND MY ***HOPE***.

YOUR NAME ENCOM-PASSES SO MANY FEELINGS.

THEY ARE NOT CORPSES, THEY ARE PEOPLE.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT ***LOVE*** AND ***RESPECT***.

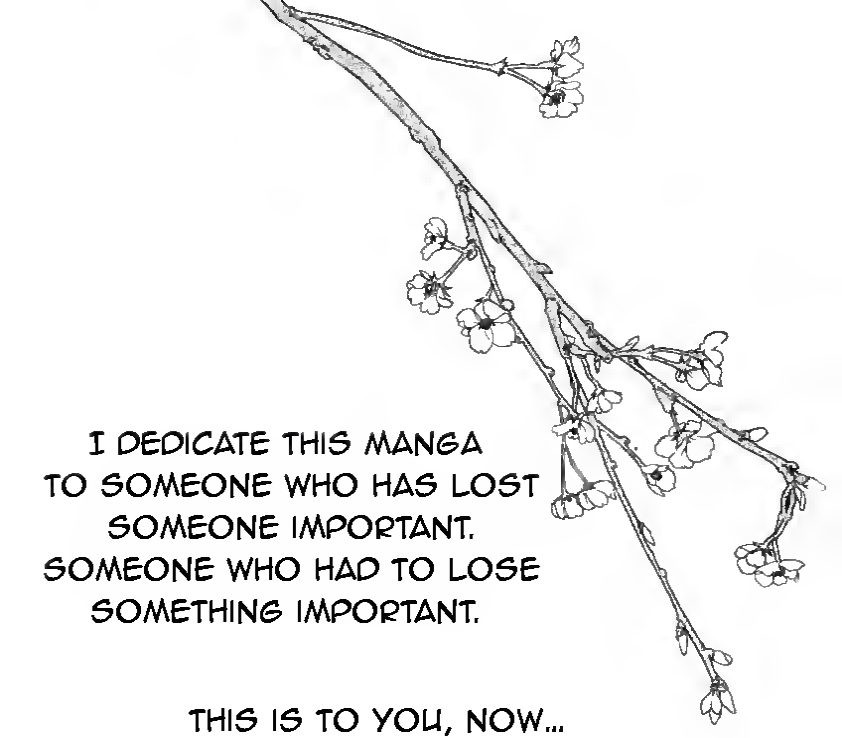
HAVE THE ***COURAGE*** WHEN IT IS NECESSARY.

MAY THE ***HONESTY*** AND ***KINDNESS*** BE WITH YOU...

... ALONG WITH ***INTELLECT***, ***JOY***, AND ***JUSTICE***.

AND FINALLY, FIND OUT YOUR OWN ***WEAKNESS*** AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE SUFFERING OF OTHERS.

THE END



I DEDICATE THIS MANGA
TO SOMEONE WHO HAS LOST
SOMEONE IMPORTANT.
SOMEONE WHO HAD TO LOSE
SOMETHING IMPORTANT.

THIS IS TO YOU, NOW...

MITSUKAZU MIHARA